

# REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, November 22. 1799.

I Have been speaking of the Affair of Persecution, and Toleration in Scotland, and have hinted on the true Notions, I hope, of that Case, viz. That the Design is apparently not Toleration of Episcopacy, but a Rupture of the Union—I have told you, that the Toleration of Dissenters there, which some People push at, can be no more than the Toleration of Jacobitism. But—

The Champions of this Toleration Project finding this Argument turn'd too hard upon them, have set up a new One—And which therefore I have added in the Question, and this is about setting up the Common-Prayer Book in Scotland—And this brings a new Dispute upon the Stage—

A Dispute that seems to have more Policy than Religion in it, and I doubt not, but it will soon be detected.

That this is not a Case of Conscience, but a Party Trick to embroil, will appear, if we consider two or three Things.

1. That for 28 Years preceding the Revolution, when the Episcopal Church was (humanly speaking) triumphant in Scotland, I am loth to say, rampant; they never admitted of the English Liturgy among them, nor was it ever attempted for 100 Years before, BUT ONCE by Archbishop Laud and his Party, which Attempt was the Overthrow of all the Contrivers, and it is more than probable, it may be so again,

again, if they go on with it. This proves it is not any Part of the Episcopal Church of Scotland—And therefore cannot be said to be demanded in Behalf of Conscience.

2. From the Revolution to the Time of the Union, during which Time, the Episcopal *Non-Jurants* Clergy in Scotland have erected several Meetings or Conventicles of their Party for Religious Worship—They have had very little Thought of the *English* Liturgy—But what of it is come among them, is meer *Innovation*, thrust in upon them by the Artifice of a Party, in part to claim Kindred of the Church of *England*, and partly to enflame and enrage the People of *Scotland*, who they know are averse to it.

3. At this Time, while the Leaders of the Party are imposing this upon the Church and People of *Scotland*—They have some Difficulty to make their own People agree to and espouse it—The Thing is so far from being desir'd by the People of *Scotland*, that even those who frequent their Meetings, that are *Episcopal* in Religious Principles, and *Jacobites* in Politick Principles, yet shun the Liturgy, dislike it—and are with Difficulty and Reluctance brought to bear it; nay, in most Parts they will not comply with it, but abandon those that read it, and throng after those Episcopal Ministers that decline it.

These are sufficient to make it appear, That the Attempt of erecting the Common-Prayer Book in *Scotland*, is not founded in the Consciences of the People—That it is a politick Design to carry on a Party Interest among us in *England*, and embroil, if possible, the People of *Scotland* with the Government, is evident from the last Head, That they are at Pains to bring their own People to espouse it, which if it were not to serve their Civil Interest, it will be hard to suggest, on what Foundation they make the Attempt.

But I come next to enquire into the Civil Rights of *Scotland*, as they stand, either supported or invaded by this Attempt. If then the Church of *Scotland* has a Civil Right to the Ecclesiastick Immunity she enjoys, and that the UNION had confirm'd these RIGHTS, then nothing can be im-

posed on her against her present Settlement, without Breach of the UNION. And this I presume to say, no Human Authority now Establish'd in *Britain* can so much as attempt, without dissolving the very Constitution.

By the UNION then, and the several Acts of Parliament for the Security of the *Presbyterian Church*, which are confirm'd by, and made Part of that UNION—The Purity and Uniformity of the Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church of *Scotland*, is to be preserv'd to the People of *Scotland*, WITHOUT ANY ALTERATION. Mark these Words, I repeat them again, WITHOUT ANY ALTERATION, to all succeeding Generations.

If any Man will say, That Toleration of the Common-Prayer can consist with preserving the Uniformity of the Worship—or the Toleration of *Episcopacy* can consist with the preserving the Government of the Church, or either of them with preserving the Discipline, then I may be ready to enquire further.

On the other hand, if they are not, then they cannot be offer'd to the Church of *Scotland*, nor can even the Parliament of *Britain* erect such a Toleration, without invading the UNION, which I humbly conceive, they have not Power to do.

Nor can the Church or People of *Scotland* legally give their Consent to any such Act of Toleration, because this Purity and Uniformity is to be preserv'd to all succeeding Generations, and the present Generation has no more Power to give up what by the UNION is thus entail'd on their Posterity, than the Parliament can give up what is conceded to the said present Generation.

By this it seems, the Church of *Scotland* is so establish'd, that neither can her Enemies impose Toleration upon her, neither can her treacherous Friends, who many of whom she may have in Power, give up the Claim to her Establishment, neither can she herself abandon her Right to or her Possession of her Establishment, exclusive of all Manner of Innovations or Invasions, on the Purity and Uniformity of her Worship, Discipline or Government.



This, I think, is the present State of the Question about Toleration in Scotland; what *Gains*, the *Artifice* of *Enemies*, and the *Craft* of *Parties* may put upon the Attempts now making of invading the Privileges of the Church of Scotland, I have nothing to do with in this Treatise; I am sure, if the *Representatives* of Scotland are faithful and vigilant—*She is in no Danger*—Nor can the Church Privileges be invaded by a Toleration, without destroying the Civil as well as Ecclesiastick Constitution, upon which whole Britain is at this time establish'd by the UNION. Two Things, I find, fall naturally in our Way, as Objections (in England especially) when we argue against Toleration the *English Liturgy* in Scotland. First, That this is falling upon the *Common-Prayer Book*, and insulting the Church of England—And, Secondly, that this will be injurious to the Toleration, which *Dissenters* enjoy in England.

It is most certain in strict Justice, that tho' both these were true, it makes nothing to the Argument. The Question is not of Civility to the Church of England, or of Prudentials to the *Dissenters* in England, but of Right and Justice to the Church of Scotland—We are here in a *Right of Property* capitulated for by the UNION, stipulated with and agreed to by the Church of England, that no Alteration shall be made, that the Purity and Uniformity shall be preserv'd: Either it is preserv'd, or it is not—If the *Common-Prayer* be impos'd on them, if *Episcopacy* be tolerated, their *Worship* and *Government* is alter'd, or it is not—If it be, the Union is invaded, or it is not. The Questions are short, and need no Cavilling—Tho' speaking of the Church of England, and the *Dissenters* in England; the *Scots* may be civil to one, and careful of the other, yet she must not give up their *Establish'd Rights* on that Score; this were to complement them at too great an Expence—Would the *Conscientious* Episcopal People in Scotland be easie, no Body molest them; they enjoy'd their *Liberty* unmolested enough, and in a Manner, which the *Dissenters* in England for many Years would have rejoyc'd at—But when nothing will satisfie but encroaching upon *Declar'd* and *Establish'd*

*Rights*, the Church of Scotland is then bound to assert her own *Property*, and neither the Church of England, or the *Dissenters*, ought to take it ill from them.

But after all, the Church of England have no Reason to take it ill, that the *Scots* do not make use of the *Common-Prayer*, any more than that the *Scots* have to take it ill, that the Church of England do not make use of the *Presbyterian Discipline*. They are two National Churches, either of them have their respective Kingdom to which they belong, Constitution on which they are built, and Laws by which they are establish'd. They are perfectly Independent one of another, and have no Superiority over or Subjection to one another; they are confederated by the UNION, and the Limits and Bounds of their respective Influence are stated and irreversibly determin'd. I say, they are but confederated, for it is no more, the Kingdoms are incorporated, but the Churches are but confederated; but the Links of this Chain are so nicely twisted together, that the Confederacy cannot be broken without destroying the Incorporation; and the One is the Bond of the other. It can then be no Affront to the Church of England to have the *Scots* say, We will have nothing to do with the *Common-Prayer*; nor to the Church of Scotland to have the Church of England say, We will have nothing to do with the *Presbyterian Discipline*. It was the great Preliminary of the Treaty, that the Churches of either Kingdom should have nothing to do with one another—And therefore the Treators on both Hands were expressly forbid to meddle with the Affair of the Church—Whose Establishments it was found absolutely necessary, should not in the least interfere with one another—nor their respective Jurisdictions be suffer'd to encroach upon, or invade one the other. If any have have Reason therefore to take ill any thing from the other, the Church of Scotland has the first Offence given her, by this Attempt of invading her Uniformity. Only this is to be said for it, That it is the Act and Deed of a Party, not of the Church of England, consider'd as a Church.

The Danger of the *Dissenters* comes next to be consider'd.